

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A method and apparatus for evaluating an integrated circuit design to determine whether elements in the integrated circuit are feedback elements. The apparatus comprises a computer capable of being configured to execute a rules checker program which analyzes information relating to the integrated circuit to determine whether or not an element being evaluated is a feedback element. The rules checker program preferably performs a first routine that determines whether an element being evaluated is a feedback element in a special type of circuit. If the first routine determines that it has not detected the special type of circuit, or special case,

5       the rules checker program begins executing a second routine. If the first routine determines that it has detected a special case, the routine ends. The second routine performs several checks to determine whether or not an element being evaluated is a feedback element. The first and second routines are designed to ensure that the order of the checks maximize efficiency in the manner in which the rules checking task is

10      performed, although the invention is not limited to the particular order.

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